It rests on its own prerogatives, and it wears the crown and wields the sceptre, whether its claims are acknowledged or denied.

Many of the ancients delighted to contemplate the moral power under this aspect, as, for example, Cicero, in the well known passage,—" Right reason is itself a law congenial to the feelings of nature, diffused among all men, uniform, eternal, calling us imperiously to our duty, and peremptorily prohibiting every violation of it." " Nor does it speak one language at Borne and another at Athens, varying from place to place, or from time to time : but it addresses itself to all nations, and to all ages, deriving its authority from the common Sovereign of the universe, and carrying home its sanctions to every breast by the inevitable punishment which it inflicts on transgressors/' It is under this same view that it is presented to us by a still higher authority. " They who have no law, (no written law,) are a law unto themselves, which show the law written in their hearts/' It is under the same aspect that it is presented by the profound German metaphysician Kant, when he calls it the categorical imperative, whose absolute rule is, Act according to a maxim which would admit of being regarded as a general law for all acting beings. So far as the mind listens to this inward monitor, it declares that virtue never can be vice, nor vice virtue: that there cannot be a state of things in which deceit is good and justice evil. The distinction between right and wrong is not a mere personal conviction: we feel that it holds good not only for ourselves, but for others, for all intelligent and moral beings.

Not only is this principle in the mind, but it has, as Butler has shown, an authoritative place there. " Thus that principle by which we survey, and either approve or disapprove of our own heart, temper, and actions, is not only to be considered as what in its turn is to have some influence,

which may be said of every passion of the lowest appetite, but as from its very nature manifestly claiming superiority over all others, insomuch that you cannot form a notion of this faculty, conscience, without taking in judgment, direction, superintendence'. This is a constituent part of the idea, that is, of the faculty itself; and to preside and govern, from the very economy and constitution of man, belongs to it. Had it strength as it has right, had it power as it has authority, it would absolutely govern the world."® He

* Human Nature, Sermon ii.